



# AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

## Housing: Question on Rent (H-18)

### FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL USES OF DATA ABOUT RENT

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) uses these data to review and analyze the services, supports, and other assistance available to individuals with developmental disabilities as well as in identifying their unmet needs.
- HHS also uses these data to determine the allocation of funds from states to eligible entities and to determine poverty guidelines that are used for participant eligibility and to determine low-income housing needs.
- Individuals use these data when considering where to relocate.
- Businesses use these data for selecting office/plant sites and for marketing products and services.
- State and local governments, faith-based and other non-profit organizations, and businesses use these data to plan, budget, and pay benefits.

### EXAMPLES OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RENT DATA

- Congregate Housing Services Act of 1979
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Title 26, Chapter 1

### QUESTION AS IT APPEARS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

**B** Answer questions 18a and b ONLY IF you **PAY RENT** for this house, apartment, or mobile home. Otherwise, **SKIP** to question 19.

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**18** a. What is the monthly rent for this house, apartment, or mobile home?

Monthly amount – Dollars

\$  .00

b. Does the monthly rent include any meals?

☐ Yes

☐ No

[<www.census.gov/acs/www>](http://www.census.gov/acs/www)

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Helping You Make Informed Decisions



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## Housing: Question on Rent (H-18)

### HISTORY OF THE RENT QUESTION

- The question on rent has been asked since 1930.
- The question also was asked on the Census 2000 long-form questionnaire.

### WHY WE ASK IT THIS WAY

This question provides space for writing in the exact monthly rent amount. Two types of rent are tabulated from this question: 1) *Contract Rent*, which is the monthly amount agreed to, or contracted for, regardless of any furnishing, utilities, or services that may be included, and 2) *Gross Rent*, which is the sum of contract rent, utilities (electricity, gas, and water), and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.). *Gross rent* is considered a good indicator of when comparing shelter costs among different households and geographic areas. When combined with income, *Gross Rent* as a Percentage of Household Income is created. This item is used to measure housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. *Gross rent* represents monthly shelter costs for renter households just as *Selected Monthly Owner Costs* represents the monthly costs for owner-occupied households.

The question on meals included in rent, first asked in 1990, is intended to measure “congregate” housing, which is generally considered to be housing units where the rent includes meals and other services, such as transportation to shopping and recreation.

### WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that collects socioeconomic and housing information and is the planned replacement for the long form in the 2010 Census.

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to conduct the ACS in every county, American Indian and Alaska Native Area, Hawaiian Home Land, and in Puerto Rico, once it is fully implemented, pending Congressional funding. The ACS has been tested across the country since 1996.

### HOW CAN I SEE THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ?

The information collected from these tests is published on the Census Bureau’s Web site at:

<[www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www)>

and American FactFinder at:

<<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

For more information call, e-mail, or visit our Web site:

**1-888-456-7215**

<[cmo.acs@census.gov](mailto:cmo.acs@census.gov)>

<<http://www.census.gov/acs/www>>

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